

From: Jones, Jack (NIH/CIT) [E]
Sent: Thursday, January 17, 2008 6:48 PM
To: NIH-STAFF@LIST.NIH.GOV
Subject: **Important Mandatory Change for NIH Windows Personal Computers**

Dear NIH Colleagues,

This e-mail is to notify you of an important Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum that directs all Federal Agencies to standardize the configuration of their government furnished Windows XP and Vista personal computers.

The primary intent of this change is to strengthen Federal IT security by reducing opportunities for hackers to access and exploit government computer systems.

The new configuration is referred to as the Federal Desktop Core Configuration (FDCC) and consists of standardizing approximately 300 configuration settings on each computer.

All Federal Agencies, including NIH, are directed to implement the FDCC settings by February 4, 2008. In preparation, the NIH IT community has been working together to test the settings and assess their impact.

How does FDCC apply to you?

- FDCC currently applies to all government furnished Windows XP and Vista desktop and laptop computers, including those that use VPN to access the NIH network remotely. It does not apply to personally owned computers at home that connect to the network using VPN.
- FDCC does not apply to Windows computers embedded or attached to scientific devices and biomedical equipment as long as they are not used for e-mail, general Internet browsing, or other administrative functions.
- While FDCC does not currently apply to Macintosh and Linux computers, these systems are under review for future inclusion.

How will FDCC impact you?

- Password changes will be more frequent. Instead of every 90 days, your password will have to be changed every 60 days.
- The settings increase the level of encryption applied to secure web sites. This means you will not be able to access certain websites using Internet Explorer due to these new settings. While it is hoped that FDCC will prompt most sites to upgrade their encryption, in the short term if there are sites you must get to, you can use a third party browser such as Firefox.
- Some of you will be affected because the FDCC settings do not include administrative privileges for users. Unless you obtain a waiver to have these privileges, you will need to contact the NIH Help Desk to make certain changes to your computer or install new software.

How can you get help?

Your IC IT leadership is prepared to assist you with specific questions. The answers to frequently asked questions have been posted on a web site at: **<http://cit.nih.gov/support/faq/fdcc>**.

To foster more technical collaboration, we have provided a wiki site at:
<http://kiwi.cit.nih.gov/vista/index.php/Category:FDCC>.

How will FDCC be implemented?

With the direct support of my office and the Center for Information Technology, each NIH Institute and Center (IC) is implementing and supporting FDCC to meet their individual needs. Not all of them will complete their implementations by the February 4, 2008 target date.

Information on how and when your IC will implement FDCC is forthcoming from your local IT support. The general procedures they will follow are provided below.

- For newly acquired computers, your local IT support will ensure that the FDCC settings are implemented as soon as the computers are added to the network.
- For existing computers, your local IT support will provide you with a schedule for when the computers will be electronically reconfigured with the settings.
- For administrative privileges, once your waiver is approved, your local IT support will provide you with an administration account that would be in addition to your user account. Your administration account would be used for making system changes, installing software, and running applications that require it. Your user account would be used for e-mail, regular browsing of the Internet, or other administrative functions.

How will the FDCC Waiver Process work?

There is an HHS waiver process that is evolving. Right now, it requires that you fill out a form for any settings and computers that need to be waived and for any users that need to have administrative privileges. We are working with HHS to make this process as simple as possible. Our hope is that NIH waivers will not have to be forwarded to the NIH and HHS Chief Information Security Officers. As more information on this process becomes available, we will update you through your local IT support and ISSO.

As always, you are also welcome to contact the NIH Help Desk with any questions or requests for assistance:

<http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov>
301-496-4357
866-319-4357 (toll free)
301-496-8294 (TTY)

Thank you for your support and cooperation in the FDCC implementation effort.

John F. Jones, Ph.D.
Acting CIO, National Institutes of Health and Acting Director, Center for Information Technology